

Effective Ways to Work with Mentees and Rules of Communication

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Be a good listener.

Let your mentee know he or she matters. If your mentee thinks you would rather be somewhere else, you will have lost a lot of ground.

Encourage mentees to do their own thinking.

Be patient, i.e., give them plenty of time to answer questions or carry on a conversation. Silence can mean they are thinking of organizing what they want to say. Be sensitive, though. It's OK to help your mentee if she/he is shy or uncertain.

If your mentee asks you a question and you are unsure of what to say, admit it to the mentee. It's OK not to know everything.

It may be necessary to ask a teacher, parent, or other adult for help when you need it.

Comment or apologize when you make a mistake.

It is important that mentees hear apologies the way adults do, and to know that no one is perfect.

Use tact and positive comments.

Encourage mentees. Seek something worthy of a compliment, especially when your mentee is having difficulties.

Accept each mentee as he or she is.

Do not feel responsible for judging a mentee's abilities, progress, or behavior.

Respect a mentee's privacy.

If a mentee reveals personal information, regard it as confidential unless it is something dangerous to the mentee or someone else. If so, it may be necessary to tell a teacher, parent, or another adult.

Keep your commitment.

The mentee will expect you to keep plans for seeing him/her. If you know you will not be able to keep a commitment, tell them in advance. Do not make promises you cannot keep. Your mentee will remember and trust is very important.

Be gracious and sympathetic with mentee's efforts.

Building self-confidence is vital to building a healthy life. Be a supporter.

Maintain a sense of humor.

Enjoy yourself!

RULES OF COMMUNICATION

Make your communication positive.

Be clear and specific.

Recognize that each individual sees things from a different point of view.

Be open and honest about your feelings.

Accept your mentee's feelings and try to understand them.

Be supportive and accepting.

Do not preach or lecture.

Learn to listen.

Maintain eye contact.

Allow time for the mentee to talk without interruption; show you are interested in what he or she has to say.

Get feedback to be sure you are understood.

Listen for a feeling tone as well as for words.

Ask questions when you do not understand.

Set examples rather than giving advice.